PRRC emerging trends

dec. 80

Published by the Princeton Religion Research Center

Vol. 2, No. 10

NEW VITALITY FOR CHURCHES IN '80's?

(Adopted from talk given by George Gallup, Jr., for the 35th Anniversary Series of THE PROTESTANT HOUR, 1980).

Looking at the trends today, one could certainly ask: is there a basis for being hopeful about the future? At times it seems we live in a "no win" era when problems do not yield to solutions.

Violence, crime, and lawlessness are found in all levels of society. We are facing a moral crisis of the first dimension; for example, cheating in schools and colleges is widespread. The public continues to be distrustful of key American institutions and of our political leaders.

There is a dark side to family life — loving and caring on the one hand, harsh and violent on the other. Many persons, actually 18 percent, in a study we conducted for the White House Conference on Families say they personally know of at least one instance of a husband or wife being so badly abused that the police or social workers were called in or that the situation led to divorce action.

ABUSE OF CHILDREN

In addition, 18 percent also say they are personally aware of at least one serious instance of physical abuse of children by their parents by someone living in their own neighborhood.

Alcohol abuse and drug dependency are reaching epidemic proportions and are taking a tremendous toll in wasted lives.

Given these festering and ugly problems, it would seem to be a giant paradox that America, according to Gallup International surveys, is one of the most religious nations of the world among the more advanced industrialized nations. What evidence is there that our high levels of religious belief and practice are operative in our lives and are having a positive effect upon society?

Are we indeed living in a post-Christian era? Has our faith lost its power to transform lives? It would appear so. Yet, I believe it would be a serious misreading of America's spiritual state to conclude that Christianity has become ineffectual.

3 IN 10 HELPING POOR

As many as three people in 10, for example, are engaged in selfless and meaningful work among the underprivileged, and elderly and the infirm, with much of this work motivated by religion.

But clearly our society is today locked in a fierce struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. And while there are certainly signs of Christian vitality — in countless selfless and heroic acts every single day — the nation, in general, is suffering from spiritual neglect and moral lethargy.

At least half the nation's clergy, we find in surveys, share this pessimistic view. They see only a vague Christian religiosity, without much real substance, operating in our lives.

FAITH HAS LOST POWER

Our religious faith appears to have lost much of its power to impel us to creative action and to provide a solid value system. And the chief cause of this weakening of faith I see in three alarming trends we have monitored over the last two decades: (1) a decline in spiritual discipline, (2) a decline in religious knowledge, and (3) a misunderstanding of the true meaning of Christian experience, which is sometimes confused with emotionalism and phenomenology.

Our religious convictions and commitment are weak because we are often unclear about *what* we believe and *why* we believe. Therefore how can we expect religion to have an important impact on our lives and on society?

LACK SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

Many of us say we have experienced God in our lives. Yet we are unable to build on these religious experiences and to grow into mature Christians. Why? Because we lack spiritual discipline and religious knowledge and because we have neglected our vast heritage of knowledge in the area of experiential religion.

We are seeing in our nation today a rising generation — idealistic and full of religious zeal — but without spiritual direction and without a knowledge of the very basics of their own faith.

SURVEY RESULTS EXAMINED

Let's examine some survey findings. One-fourth of all teenagers never read the Bible. Fifteen percent cannot name even one of the Ten Commandments, which provide the ethical basis for society. Only three percent can name all ten. Furthermore, they lack a basic knowledge of our religious history and traditions.

The fact is, despite the best efforts of our churches, our homes, and the religious media, we are producing in America today a nation of spiritually undernourished and religiously illiterate youth.

And I am not referring only to young people who might be classified as academically unmotivated or underachievers. Even the brightest of students often do not have even a rudimentary knowledge

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New Vitality for Churches in '80's (continued)

of the Bible and their religious traditions.

Furthermore, our churches, homes, and religious institutions have failed in another respect: they have not created the desire to continue one's religious education in adult years. Religious training for many comes to an abrupt halt in childhood or the early teens. We simply stop growing spiritually. Thus we find people who may have a Ph. D. in aerodynamics and yet only a third-grade knowledge of religion.

When people lack spiritual discipline and are denied rational knowledge of religion, as well as experiential knowledge of a relationship with the Risen Christ within us, they frequently are unable to withstand the appeal of counterfeit religious groups. In addition, they are often too ready to abandon the religious traditions which have been forged through the centuries.

What can be done to stem the drift toward secularism and to strengthen the religious undergirding of our society? Clearly we must do some careful planning and set clear goals that we would like to reach during the coming decade. Then we must resolve to take specific steps to reach these goals.

7 STEPS SUGGESTED

I would like to suggest for consideration seven steps, as indicated by survey data:

First, try to link the will among youth to believe with their desire to serve society. What appears needed is a whole new set of religious vocations — for older persons as well as youth — to help, for example, manage a Help Line telephone ministry, organize transportation systems for the elderly or handicapped, pioneer fresh programs at prison and detention centers, help those who drop out of school. The list could be greatly expanded.

The desire on the part of youth for models for service is not limited to American youth. Young people in France recently told Pope John Paul II that they wanted to serve the Church but didn't have models to adopt and follow. It clearly behooves all churches to develop new and creative outlets for Christian youth here and abroad, who are spiritually "all charged up" but have no place to go.

Second, develop a greater support system among the lay members of a given church so that the clergy can be freed to spend more time in pastoral counseling. When unchurched persons in the study, *The Unchurched American*, were asked what would bring them back to the church, one of the key reasons given was "if I can find a minister with whom I could discuss my religious doubts and needs."

INDIVIDUALIZED RELIGION

Third, in view of what would appear to be a trend toward individualized religion, stress the importance of worshipping together. Our surveys show that *believing* is increasingly being separated from *belonging*. Yet, as the former head of the Anglican Church, Donald Coggan, writes: "A Christian is a member of a living, worshipping, praying, witnessing community."

Fourth, develop a new "team effort" between the clergy and parents to help the latter strengthen religion in the home. Certainly our efforts to build religious faith into our lives should start with the home. The observation that "most of those who have ever had religious training in the home remain religious to the end" is borne out by our survey findings.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Fifth, because the electronic media will greatly shape our religious lives in the years ahead, we should make every effort to see that programs are developed which will meet the needs and tastes and foster the spiritual growth of the broad spectrum of the Christian population. Greater emphasis, for example, could be placed on hard theological discussion, the need to direct personal renewal into social renewal, the importance of sacramental life and the need to belong to a worshipping community.

Sixth, stress responsible evangelism. Encourage Christians not only to share their spiritual experiences with others, but to witness their faith by living out the love of Christ in their lives. Their approach should be helpful and nonthreatening; persons who evangelize should do the *listening*.

EXAMINE EDUCATION

Seventh, re-examine the system of religious education in the U.S. in an attempt to overcome the public's lack of awareness of their religious traditions and to improve the dismally low state of Biblical knowledge.

The alarm has already been sounded in this nation for upgrading the quality of *secular* education. The time is now overdue for sounding the alarm in terms of *religious* education which must undergird our lives and which will give our efforts and pursuits the creative energy and divine dimension they require, through both sacramental life and prayer life.

I believe you will agree that social engineering alone, unless accompanied by spiritual renewal, will not suffice. Ethical humanism, or a vague Christian religiosity, does not have the power to transform society.

In looking to the 1980's we can be encouraged by the fact that while Americans may not know what should be done to re-invigorate and redirect our society, they are least keenly aware that something is missing or lacking in our lives. There is an intense longing for satisfying answers to the painful perplexities of life.

INTERFAITH UNDERSTANDING

We can also be encouraged by the fact that interfaith understanding is greater today than ever before. We appear to be more willing than ever to work together and to pray together; to rise above the internal struggles that divide and separate our religions and denominations and unite in the common flight against materialism and secularism.

In there hope for the future? Yes, I sincerely believe that, despite certain ominous trends in society today, a careful examination of America's religious potential gives us cause to be optimistic. Indeed, the vitality of our churches could well be the surprise of the 1980's.

Focus on Greek Americans Today

(Adopted from a three-part series of articles based on a study of the Greek Orthodox population in the U.S. The study was conducted for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America by The Gallup Organization and coordinated through the Princeton Religion Research Center).

In many key respects the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America is in a unique position to augment its present efforts to enrich the spiritual lives of its adherents as well as to bring others into the community of active believers.

A profile of the Greek American population, and of Greek Orthodox Church members, reveals many positive elements which could be important to the future health of the Church.

At the same time, however, there are other survey findings which are clearly "warning signs" to the Church.

Here are the positive elements:

1. *Levels of attested belief among Greek American adults (18 and older) are extraordinarily high – higher not only for the levels recorded for most other major faiths in the U. S., but for most other nations of the world as well.*

2. *Levels of religious practice among Greek Americans and among church members are also high.*

3. *A large majority of parents of children under 18 believe it is "very important" to them that their children become "religious persons."*

In addition, a high proportion of children under 18 are receiving religious training of some sort: 82 percent among Greek American parents and 88 percent among church member parents.

A significant proportion of children under 18 belong to religious organizations or are involved in religious activies.

4. *A high level of awareness of Archdiocesan institutions and organizations is found among the Greek American community in the U. S., and particularly among church members.*

5. *The proportion of adults who say they have read the newspapers for the Archdiocese within the last 12 months is an impressive 75 percent for Greek Americans and 81 percent for church members.*

6. *About half of Greek-Americans – and six in 10 among church members – say their church provides enough leadership opportunities for them to use their own personal abilities and talents in performing volunteer work.*

7. *Young adults in U. S. society hold attitudes which differ sharply from those of their elders on a great number of issues, particularly those related to personal morality. When both groups – young and old – are churched, however, these differences are not nearly so pronounced.*

8. *Both surveyed groups give a generally favorable rating to four key aspects or functions of the Greek Orthodox Church.*

Here is how Greek Americans rate the four:

* Fifty-two percent give the *national charitable efforts* of the Church an "excellent" or "good" rating, while 22 percent give their efforts a "fair" and 10 percent a "poor" rating.

* Fifty percent rate the *national educational institutes* of the Church as "excellent" or "good," 25 percent rate them as "fair" and 11 percent as "poor."

* Forty-seven percent rate the communications and publications of the Church as "excellent" or "good," while 25 percent rate them as "fair" and 14 percent as "poor."

* Forty-three percent rate the leadership of the Church on a national level as "excellent" or "good," while 31 percent rate it as "fair" and 14 percent as "poor."

As the survey reveals, there are distinct characteristics of the U.S. Greek population which may give them added strength in dealing with the problems of society:

1. Greek Americans have a high level of religious belief and practice, which could be expected to help direct and energize actions, and
2. The primacy of the family in the life of Greek Americans appears to have a profound influence on their lives. The Greek family, buttressed as it is by the strength of the Greek Orthodox faith, can serve as an example to the rest of society as it copes with the many problems in today's society. These problems include divorce, lack of discipline in the family, violence, alcohol abuse and drug dependency, money problems, and the high mobility of families.

'INDEX OF LEADING RELIGIOUS INDICATORS' TOPIC AT CONFERENCE IN CINCINNATI

At the annual meeting of the *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion* (meeting jointly with the *Religious Research Association* and *Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education),* George Gallup, Jr. led a discussion on the topic, "Developing an Index of Leading Religious Indicators."

Gallup, Executive Director of the *Princeton Religion Research Center, Inc.* proposed developing an annual index of 10 to 20 questions which would serve the needs of the clergy of all faiths as well as persons in the fields of religious education and research.

The index, which would be included in a survey at the same time each year, would draw on the excellent work done in this field by many researchers. The questions would be designed to provide a kind of annual "State of the Church" report on the changing religious climate in the U.S.

The index, as proposed, would attempt to probe the inner dymanics of faith and to shed light on such basic questions as: What is the changing impact of religion on society? Of society on religion?

The index would also provide information of an immediate practical nature such as church attendance and membership, the importance of religion in people's lives, the proportions of the populace who view/listen to religious programs on TV/radio, the trend in donations to churches, Bible reading, and evangelism, as well as other items dealing with religious belief, knowledge and practice.

Focus On Youth

Knowledge of Commandments Is Poor

PRINCETON, N.J. – While they overwhelmingly believe that the Ten Commandments are still valid rules for living today, teenagers have a tough time recalling exactly what those rules are.

The latest Gallup Youth Survey found that only 35 percent of teens nationwide could name five or more of the Commandments, and only three teens in 100 could name all 10.

But in spirit at least, teens were all for the ancient rules, with 79 percent of the young people considering them relevant guidelines for today.

Such enthusiastic support may seem to contradict the survey results we reported last week, which showed that one teen in three thought religion was largely old–fashioned and out-of-date. It may be, however, that teen-agers are turned-off by organized religion, but nonetheless continue to have faith in religious teachings.

Our pollsters found that only 17 percent of the teens nationwide thought the Ten Commandments were no longer valid. Further, we found that support for the rules came consistently from every teen subgroup polled, although we did find some interesting variations.

Girls were slightly more inclined than boys to express faith in the validity of the Commandments, and teens from white-collar backgrounds were a bit more positive about the rules than were their counterparts from blue-collar homes.

We found that black teens and whites shared identical faith in the Commandments, and Catholics and Protestants were very close in their opinions, with the latter expressing only slightly more faith than the former.

Regionally, Southern teens were the most positive about the Commandments, and Western teens were the most negative.

Teens were somewhat less consistent in their ability to name the Commandments. For example, fully 40 percent of the girls could name five or more, while the figure was only 30 percent for teen boys.

Older teens, ages 16 to 18, were better at recalling the Commandments than were young teens, and Catholics and whites did a bit better than Protestants and blacks. The rules came to mind better for Southern and Midwestern teens than for those from the West.

The most easily remembered Commandment, the one that prohibits stealing, was named by 68 percent of the teens. A bit surprisingly, more teens knew of the Commandment against adultery than the one banning murder.

Only the above three Commandments were named by more than half of the teens polled. From there, ability to recall the rules dropped sharply, ending with the Commandment prohibiting the worship of idols, which was named by only 10 percent.

Today's findings are based on 1,003 telephone interviews conducted in May with a representative national cross-section of teens, ages 13 to 18.

The questions asked were:

– Did you happen to attend church or synagogue in the last seven days, or not?

– Please tell me all the Ten Commandments in the Bible you can think of.

– In general, do you feel the Ten Commandments are valid rules or precepts for living in today's society, or not?

Some key findings are shown in the accompanying tables.

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HOW MANY OF THE 10 COMMANDMENTS CAN BE NAMED BY TEENS?

	1 or More	5 or More	Avg.
NATIONAL	85%	35%	3.7%
Boys	84	30	3.5
Girls	86	40	3.9
Both Sexes:			
13-15 years old	80	33	3.5
16-18 years old	90	38	3.8
Whites	86	37	3.8
Blacks	83	33	3.4
Protestants	87	35	3.7
Catholics	85	39	4.0
White-collar background	87	38	3.8
Blue-collar background	85	34	3.6
East	83	38	3.7
Midwest	87	35	3.8
South	90	39	3.8
West	78	26	3.2
Church attenders	91	46	4.4
Non-attenders	79	25	3.0
10 Commandments are valid	91	40	4.1
10 Commandments are not valid	69	20	2.5

EMERGING TRENDS is published monthly except July and August by the PRINCETON RELIGION RESEARCH CENTER. The Center, founded in 1977, is an inter-faith non-denominational research organization with headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey. The PRRC specializes in creative, actionable research, utilizing the worldwide attitudinal and behavioral facilities of Gallup International. The purpose of the PRRC is to gain a better understanding of the nature and depth of religious commitment in the U.S. and abroad and to explore ways this information can enable religious leaders to promote spiritual growth. A one year subscription can be obtained for $20; inquire: **Publications Department, 53 Bank Street, Princeton, N.J. 08540 (Telephone: 609-924-2809). PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS CHANGE.**

2/24/81 R8780-1

PRRC emerging trends

Jan. 81

Published by the Princeton Religion Research Center Vol. 3, No. 1

©

PUBLIC'S VIEWS ON THE MORAL MAJORITY

PRINCETON, N.J. – With much controversy surrounding the Moral Majority, the fundamentalist political movement started by the Rev. Jerry Falwell, the Gallup Poll sought to find out the level of public awareness of, and attitudes toward, the controversial movement which some political observers believe was largely responsible for the defeat of certain key members of Congress in the November elections. The Moral Majority, which claimed in October that it had registered 4 million new fundamentalist voters nationally, gave candidates "morality ratings" according to their stand on issues ranging from abortion to SALT II.

The efforts of the Moral Majority and other conservative Christian groups to mobilize a Christian vote in the recent presidential campaign have drawn sharp criticism from certain quarters. The most serious charge made against these religious activists is that they violate the constitutional principle of separation of church and state.

Awareness Level is Currently Low

Less than half the sample (40%) have heard or read about the Moral Majority, while even fewer – 26% of the total sample – are familiar with the objectives and goals of this organization.

Among the latter "informed" group, disapproval outweighs approval 13 to 8%, with 5% undecided.

While a relatively small proportion of the public is supportive of the Moral Majority, it should be noted that the 8% in favor projects to 12 or 13 million adults nationally, a number large enough when distributed among the states to be decisive in close congressional races.

Public Feels Leaders Should Speak Out

Earlier surveys have indicated that efforts of religious leaders to tell voters which presidential candidates they should or should not vote for do not sit well with most Americans. For example, by a 2-to-1 margin, the public believes it is wrong for religious groups to work actively for the defeat of candidates who don't agree with their position on certain issues.

At the same time, however, the view of at least half the U.S. public, as determined by a survey conducted for *Christianity Today* by the Gallup Organization, Inc., is that it is "very" or "fairly" important for religious organizations to make public statements on political and economic matters as to what they feel would be consonant with the will of God.

Republicans More Favorable

Republicans and those who voted for Ronald Reagan are far more likely to hold favorable opinions of the Moral Majority than are Democrats and those who voted for President Jimmy Carter.

Church members, regular churchgoers, those who watch religious television programs, and persons who say religion plays an important role in their lives are more favorably disposed toward the Moral Majority than are their counterparts.

Here is the first question asked:

Have you heard or read about an organization called the Moral Majority?

A total of 40% replied affirmatively. This group was then asked:

From what you know about it, how would you describe the Moral Majority. For example, what are its objectives and what does it stand for?

Judging from their responses to the above question, 26% of the public can be considered "informed" about the Moral Majority. This group was then asked:

In general would you say that you mostly approve or mostly disapprove of the Moral Majority?

Following are the results, based on the total sample:

Rating of Moral Majority

Approve	8%
Disapprove	13
No opinion	5
Total informed	26%

The table on page two shows current attitudes toward the Moral Majority, based on "informed" opinion.

The findings reported here are based on in-person interviews with 1,551 adults, 18 and older, conducted in more than 300 scientifically-selected localities across the nation during the period November 21-24.

For results based on a sample of this size, one can say with 95 percent confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be three percentage points in either direction.

Baptists are Best 'Evangelizers'

One key reason certain denominations have experienced significant growth in recent years while others have suffered a decline in members is seen in the results of recent Gallup surveys on the percentage of persons who have "evangelized" – that is, have tried to encourage someone to believe in Jesus Christ or to accept Jesus Christ as his or her Savior.

Two out of every three persons who say they belong to a Baptist church indicate they have done so, compared to 46% of Lutherans, 45% of Presbyterians, 43% of Methodists, 30% of Catholics and 29% of Episcopalians.

Among those likely to have "evangelized" are women, non-whites and Southerners.

Older persons tend to be more likely to have tried to "win someone for Christ", yet the differences on the basis of age are not great. As many as four in 10 among the 18 to 24-year old group say they have participated in such activity.

As might be expected, church members, regular church attenders, and those who say religion is "very important" in their lives are the most likely to have been involved in evangelism.

Following are the results in detail:

INVOLVED IN EVANGELISM

"Have you ever tried to encourage someone to believe in Jesus Christ or to accept Jesus Christ as his or her Savior?"

% Saying Yes

NATIONAL	44%
Protestants	57
Baptists	67
Lutherans	46
Presbyterians	45
Methodists	43
Episcopalians	29
Catholics	30
Men	38
Women	50
Whites	42
Non-whites	61
East	32
Midwest	43
South	62
West	38
18-24 years old	38
25-29 years old	41
30-49 years old	45
50 and older	48
College background	42
High school	43
Grade school	54
Married	47
Single	32
Widowed	49
Divorced	45
Church members	52
Non-members	25
Regular church attenders	60
Not regular	34
Religion is "very important" in life	62
"Fairly" important	28
"Not very"	8

(The results above are based on in-person interviews with 3,148 adults, interviewed in two national surveys conducted in July and August.)

Approval of Moral Majority
(Views of "Informed" Group)

	Informed	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion
NATIONAL	26%	8%	13%	5%
Regular churchgoers	30	12	12	6
Not regular churchgoers	23	5	14	4
Church members	26	9	12	5
Non-members	24	4	16	4
Say religion is "very" important in their lives	27	10	11	6
Say "fairly" important	20	6	11	3
Say "not very" important	38	3	30	5
Have watched religous TV programs in last 12 months	27	10	13	4
Have not	25	6	14	5
Voted for Reagan	35	15	12	8
Voted for Carter	29	6	20	3
Republicans	32	13	12	7
Democrats	20	4	14	2
Independents	31	9	16	6
Protestants	27	9	13	5
Catholics	20	5	11	4
Men	28	9	14	5
Women	24	6	13	5
College education	49	11	28	10
High school or less	16	6	7	3
18-29 years old	19	4	11	4
30-49 years old	31	10	14	7
50 and older	27	9	15	3
East	23	5	14	4
Midwest	23	7	12	4
South	27	10	11	6
West	33	10	18	5

Fewer Today Favor Aid to Parochial Schools

PRINCETON, N.J. – Public support for an admendment to the Constitution that would permit government financial aid to parochial schools has declined since a 1974 survey.

In the latest Gallup survey, 40% say they would favor such an amendment while 49% are opposed. In the earlier survey, 52% voted in favor and 35% said no. One key factor in the public's changing views may be growing opposition to federal spending for *any* purpose.

As might be expected, Catholics and Protestants hold widely divergent views, with Catholics almost twice as likely as Protestants to favor an amendment permitting aid to parochial schools.

Most in favor are Catholics who say religion is "very important" in their lives, with 70% of this group calling for an amendment to permit prayer.

Interestingly, support for such an amendment has declined about equally for Protestants and Catholics since the 1974 survey. In that survey, 44% of Protestants favored aid to parochial schools while 41% expressed opposition. Among Catholics, 76% voted in favor while only 15% were opposed.

In the current survey Easterners are most inclined to favor the proposed amendment, possibly reflecting the relatively high concentration of Catholics in this section of the nation.

Following is the question and trend:

"Would you favor or oppose an amendment to the Constitution that would permit government financial aid to parochial schools?"

AMENDMENT TO PERMIT AID TO PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS?

	Favor	Oppose	No Opinion
1980	40%	49%	11%
1974	52	35	13

Here are the key findings from the current survey:

	Favor	Oppose	No Opinion
NATIONAL	40%	49%	11%
Catholics	62	30	8
Protestants	34	55	11
Catholics who say religion is "very important"	70	24	6
"Fairly" or "not at all important"	52	34	14
East	47	41	12
Midwest	43	48	9
South	38	50	12
West	30	61	9

FREQUENCY OF PRAYER DOWN SINCE 1965

Princeton, N.J. – Although the proportion of American adults who say they pray has shown very little change over the last quarter century, the proportion who pray "frequently" – that is, "twice a day or more" – is significantly down since 1965.

Following are the questions asked in surveys in 1952, 1965 and 1978, and the results (an update will be provided in a 1981 survey):

PERCENT WHO PRAY
"Do you ever pray to God?"

1952	92%
1965	92
1978	89

"About how many times would you say you have prayed during the last seven days?"

TWICE A DAY OR MORE
(based on total sample)

1952	38%
1965	38
1978	27

The 1978 results are based on a national survey, *The Unchurched American*, conducted in 1978 for 31 religious groups and denominations.

Too Many Changes Since Vatican II?

The predominant opinion among both Catholic women and men is that there have been about the right number of changes in the Catholic Church since Vatican II. Among those who feel otherwise, the weight of opinion – particularly among women – is that there have been "too many" changes.

About half of Catholic women (48%) believe there have been the right number of changes since the historic conclave, while 31% say "too many" and 13% say "too few". The comparable figures for men: "about the right amount" – 50%; "too many" – 24%; "too few" – 17%.

These findings are from a survey conducted by the Gallup Organization, Inc. The survey was part of a study called *Women in Ministry: A Survey of the Experience of Roman Catholic Women in the United States*, a project undertaken for the *Ecclesial Role of Women Commission* of the *Leadership Conference of Women Religious* by the *Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate*, Washington. D.C.

Survey respondents were tested on changes in 10 areas. Those who feel the number of changes have been about right easily predominate, among both women and men. Areas of chief discontent – that is, where relatively high proportions say there have been "too few" changes since Vatican II are in these areas: the Church's position on contraception, the Church's attitude toward divorced Catholics, and the role of women in the Church.

Many Catholics, *however*, while critical of the Church in regard to the rate of changes since Vatican II – either "too few" or "too many" – are nevertheless remaining involved in a wide variety of church-related activities. This is seen in their response to the 12 ministries tested in the survey. Discontent with the Church's position on certain issues does not appear to be having any serious impact upon involvement in ministries.

In 12-Month Period

50% Watched Religious TV Programs

PRINCETON, N.J. – Half of all Americans watched religious TV programs in a recent 12-month period, according to a nationwide Gallup survey conducted in November.

Persons most likely to watch such programs include non-whites, older adults, widowed persons, Protestants and regular churchgoers.

Following is the question:

"Have you watched any religious TV programs in the last 12 months?"

Here are the results by key groups:

WATCHED RELIGIOUS TV IN LAST 12 MONTHS

National	50%
Men	46
Women	55
Whites	49
Non-whites	60
18-24 years old	41
25-29 years old	46
30-49 years old	48
50 and older	58
Married	52
Single	41
Widowed	59
Divorced	50
Protestants	59
Catholics	34
Church members	57
Non-members	37
Regular churchgoers	62
Non-regular	43
These saying religion "very important"	64
"Fairly important"	38
"Not very important"	20
East	42
Midwest	50
South	64
West	42
College background	43
High school	52
Grade school	61
Republicans	53
Democrats	58
Independents	41

COMING IN *EMERGING TRENDS* IN 1981:

* Results of new national survey of clergy: How do they assess the religious climate in the U.S.? What outreach programs are proving successful?

* Gallup International survey results: Are religious beliefs in Europe continuing to decline?

* Is the "electronic church" increasing or decreasing involvement in the local church?

* Teens: Are the "cults" gaining in appeal? What is the state of Biblical knowledge among teenagers?

HOW TO REACH THE UNCHURCHED AMERICAN

Some 61 million American adults are not members of any church. Yet as many as half this number see a situation where they could become active members of a church today.

A nationwide study – the first to deal specifically with the values, interests, and backgrounds of the unchurched – points to concrete steps that can be taken to reach those who are churchless. This study was carried out by the Gallup Organization and the Princeton Religion Research Center for a coalition of 31 religious groups and denominations.

The report on this study has been reprinted due to popular demand. To order, send $15 to the Princeton Religion Research Center, Inc., 53 Bank Street, Princeton, N.J. 08540.

EMERGING TRENDS is published monthly except July and August by the PRINCETON RELIGION RESEARCH CENTER. The Center, founded in 1977, is an inter-faith non-denominational research organization with headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey. The PRRC specializes in creative, actionable research, utilizing the worldwide attitudinal and behavioral facilities of Gallup International. The purpose of the PRRC is to gain a better understanding of the nature and depth of religious commitment in the U.S. and abroad and to explore ways this information can enable religious leaders to promote spiritual growth. A one year subscription can be obtained for $20; inquire: **Publications Department, 53 Bank Street, Princeton, N.J. 08540 (Telephone: 609-924-2809). PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS CHANGE.**

PRRC emerging trends

Published by the Princeton Religion Research Center Vol. 3, No. 2

feb. 81

40% ATTEND CHURCH IN TYPICAL WEEK

PRINCETON, N.J. — Four in 10 adults nationwide attended church or synagogue in a typical week of 1980, with those living in the Midwest and South more likely to attend regularly than those who live in the East and West.

Here are the findings:

Attended in Typical Week of 1980

Nationwide	40%
East	40
Midwest	45
South	42
West	29

Since 1958 – a peak year for church attendance – the national rate of churchgoing has dropped nine percentage points, from 49% to 40% in 1980 – the same rate of attendance found throughout the 1970s.

The decline has been sharpest among Catholics. Attendance at Mass fell 22 points – from 74 to 52% – between 1958 and 1978, and currently stands at 53%.

Attendance among Protestants has changed very little, declining only six percentage points – from 44 to 38% – between 1958 and 1964, and has since remained at the 1964 level. The latest Protestant attendance figure is 39%.

The following table shows highlights in the trend for the two major Christian groups:

	Protestants	Catholics
1958	44%	74%
1968	38	65
1978	40	52
1979	40	52
1980	39	53

ATTENDANCE AT SYNAGOGUE

Mirroring the pattern of churchgoing among Protestants and Catholics, attendance at synagogue declined between the late 1950s and early 1970s, but since then it has shown an upturn. In surveys taken between 1975 and 1980, 24% of Jews attended synagogue in a typical week.

The following table shows results by groups of years:

Synagogue Attendance

1955-56	23%
1961-64	22
1965-69	20
1970-74	17
1975-80	24

SHARP DIFFERENCES BY AGE

Sharp differences in church or synagogue attendance are found by age, with 31% of adults under 30 attending in a typical week in 1980, compared to 40% among persons 30 to 49 years old and 47% among those 50 and older.

In 1958, the proportions of attenders in each age group were very similar, with about as many younger as older persons attending church or synagogue.

Churchgoing among adults under 30 is 17 percentage points lower today than it was in 1958, while it has declined by 11 points among 30-49 year olds and by merely one point among those 50 and older.

Following is the full trend since 1939. The audits from 1955 to 1980 were based on an average of the combined results of several surveys during each year. The figures prior to 1955 were based on a single annual survey:

Attendance in Typical Week 1939 – 1980

1939	41%
1940	37**
1950	39
1954	46
1955	49*
1956	46
1957	47
1958	49*
1959	47
1960	47
1961	47
1962	46
1963	46
1964	45
1965	44
1966	44
1967	43
1968	43
1969	42
1970	42
1971	40
1972	40
1973	40
1974	40
1975	40
1976	42
1977	41
1978	41
1979	40
1980	40

*High points in attendance.
**Low point in attendance.

To estimate the average attendance during 1980, surveys of representative samples of the adult population were made in seven selected weeks during the year. A total of 10,982 adults, 18 and older, were interviewed in person in scientifically-selected localities across the nation. This question was asked:

"Did you, yourself, happen to attend church or synagogue in the last seven days?"

Study Probes 'Electronic Church'

PRINCETON, N.J. — Much controversy has surrounded the so-called "electronic church," and particularly those religious programs involving TV and radio evangelists.

The electronic church has proved to be one of the most remarkable developments in American religion. There are an estimated 1400 religious radio stations, 35 religious TV stations and four religious TV networks.

Many pastors express concern that the "electronic church" will cause church members to decrease their involvement in local churches and will keep prospective members from joining a church.

Others worry about the effects of the electronic media on the quality of Christian life and feel that religious programs may make religion too easy and comfortable, encourage individualized religion and undermine religious commitment. Still others object to what they consider the "show business" aspects of certain religious programs on TV.

But defenders of the electronic church point out that religious programs on radio and television reach a vast number of people who might not be reached otherwise, and in fact, are the only way to bring church services to many of the elderly, the infirm and handicapped.

Other supporters of the use of the media to convey a religious message feel that such efforts raise the level of awareness of the unchurched and make them more likely to become involved in the community of active believers. Some evangelists, including Billy Graham and Robert Schuller, actively encourage their listeners to participate in the life of local churches.

IMPACT ON UNCHURCHED

In a 30-day test period, 3 in 10 unchurched Americans said they had listened to, or watched radio or TV programs, produced by a religious organization. And as a result of watching or listening to these programs, one person in seven of these persons said they considered becoming active in a church.

These findings emerge from "The Unchurched American," a major religious study by the Gallup Organization and the Princeton Religion Research Center, conducted in 1978. The study was sponsored by a coalition of 31 religious organizations coordinated through the National Council of Churches.

The "unchurched" are defined as those who are not members of a church or synagoque or who have not attended church or synagoque in the previous six months, apart from weddings, funerals, or special holidays such as Christmas, Easter, or Yom Kippur.

The results show that as many as one-third of those who watch religious TV programs say that these programs have had an effect of one kind or another on their involvement in their local church and its activities over the last three years. And among these, opinion is heavily on the side that religious TV programs have *increased* rather than *lessened* their local involvement.

The subject of the impact of the electronic church on religious beliefs, attitudes and practices calls for careful and detailed research. However, to gain some initial insight into the impact of religious TV on church involvement, the Gallup Poll in November asked the following question of persons who said they had watched religious TV programs in the last 12 months (50% of the sample):

"Would you say that religious television programs have increased your involvement in your local church and its activities over the last 3 years, or lessened your involvement?"

In assessing the findings reported in this article, readers should bear in mind that survey respondents are referring to TV religious programs of a wide variety, including not only programs that feature evangelical preaching, but telecasts of religious services, crusades, religious talk shows, documentaries, and dramatizations about the Bible.

WHO ARE THE VIEWERS?

Among adults who have watched religious programs on TV during the 12-month period tested (50%), a high proportion are Protestants (particularly members of Baptist Churches), older persons, women, non-whites, and persons living in the South.

The findings reported today are based on in-person interviews with a total sample of 1,551 adults, 18 and older, of whom 776 had watched religious programs on TV. The interviews were conducted in more than 300 scientifically-selected localities across the nation during the period November 21-24.

For results based on a sample of this size, one can say with 95 percent confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be 4 percentage points in either direction.

EFFECT OF TV PROGRAMS ON LOCAL CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

	Increased	Lessened	No Difference	Don't Know
National	27%	7%	65%	1%
Protestants	30	6	63	1
Catholics	22	7	70	1
Under 30 years	25	10	64	1
18-24	25	13	60	2
25-29	24	5	71	*
30-49	26	6	67	1
50 & over	29	7	63	1
Married	25	6	68	1
Single	29	13	55	3
Widowed	38	1	60	1
Church attenders	34	2	63	1
Non-attenders	20	12	66	2
Church members	29	6	64	1
Non-members	20	10	68	2
Religion is very important in life	32	5	62	1
Fairly important	17	9	72	2
Not at all important	2	25	72	1

*Less than 1%

33-Year Downtrend In Church Membership Levels Out In 1980

PRINCETON, N.J. -- The 33-year downtrend in church and synagogue membership appears to have levelled out in 1980, with 69% of the 10,982 adults surveyed saying they are members.

In 1979 and 1978 the membership figures were 68%.

Church and synagogue membership has been on a steady overall downtrend since 1947 when the Gallup Poll showed 76% to be members.

It is important to bear in mind that the percentages represent *self-classifications*: the proportions of people who *say* they are members of a church. They, therefore, may include some who are not actually on the rolls of a local church. Furthermore, it should be noted that adherents of certain faiths -- such as Roman Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox -- are considered to be members at birth.

Here is the trend:

CHURCH/SYNAGOGUE MEMBERSHIP

1937	73%
1938	73
1939	72
1940	72
1942	75
1943	76
1944	75
1952	73
1965	73
1975	71
1976	71
1977	70
1978	68
1979	68
1980	69

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Most likely to say they are members of a church are women, non-whites, adults 50 years of age and older, persons living in the Midwest and South, and married persons. Little difference is found on the basis of level of formal education.

TAX LAWS AND DONATIONS

In 1830 Alexis deTocqueville characterized Americans as people who form committees to solve community problems. More recently, Waldemar Nielson, the head of a philanthropic consulting firm, speculated that this kind of voluntary activity has been instrumental of the most basic social change and reform in America - from the abolition of slavery and child labor to the vote for women. *Yet some have expressed concern that changing tax laws might result in a dramatic decline in charitable donations.*

Since the 1940s when the standard tax deduction was introduced, there has been a steady decline in the proportion who itemize their return. A Gallup survey conducted in 1979 for the Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations documented that at every income level, those who itemize tax return give considerably more in charitable donations than those who do not itemize. For example, among those earning $15,000 - $20,000, the average donation of itemizers was $652, compared with an average of $222 among the non-itemizers.

RELIGION IN AMERICA, 1981 NOW AVAILABLE

The 1981 issue of *RELIGION IN AMERICA* is now available! Published by the Gallup Organization, Inc. and the Princeton Religion Research Center, this index will help you pinpoint the factors behind growth and loss in membership and support. It will also provide other valuable data about the "state of the Church."

The latest index provides updates on church and synagogue attendance, church membership, religious preference, the importance of religion in one's life, confidence in organized religion and public perceptions of the influence of religion on society.

Full demographic information is provided. Where possible, trends are illustrated by charts.

To order, send check for $20 to the Princeton Religion Research Center, P.O. Box 628, Princeton, NJ 08540.

RELIGIOUS FIGURES PROMINENT ON 'MOST ADMIRED' LISTS

PRINCETON, N.J. -- First Lady Rosalynn Carter and Mother Teresa of Calcutta are tied for first place as the women most admired by the American public.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is in second place, followed by former First Lady Betty Ford in third.

Named fourth and fifth are Connecticut Governor Ella Grasso (now deceased) and former Texas Congresswoman Barbara Jordan.

In sixth place on this year's list is TV commentator Barbara Walters, followed by Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in seventh.

In eighth and ninth places are Nancy Reagan and former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, respectively, Actress Jane Fonda rounds out the top 10.

'Most Admired' Men

Pope John Paul II tops the list of men most admired by the American public.

President Jimmy Carter is the second biggest votegetter, followed by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in third place.

President Carter was in first place in the three previous Gallup Poll "most admired" man audits.

In fourth place on this year's list is evangelist Billy Graham, who has figured high in the balloting on every Gallup Poll "most admired" man list for the last quarter century. He is followed by President Ronald Reagan (then President-elect).

In sixth place this year is former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, followed in seventh by former Chief Executive Richard Nixon.

Winning the eighth greatest number of votes is former President Gerald Ford. Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts is number nine on this year's list, while rounding out the top 10 is Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

Views on Abortion Stay Constant

PRINCETON, N.J. — Despite the emotional and political turmoil surrounding the issue of abortion, public opinion on this controversial topic has changed remarkably little since the Supreme Court ruled in 1973 that women have the right to have abortions performed.

In the latest Gallup survey, 53 percent believe that abortions should be "legal under *only certain* circumstances," while one fourth (25 percent) feel that abortions should be "legal under *any* circumstances" and 18 percent say they should be "illegal under *all* circumstances."

As the following table shows, current attitudes closely parallel those recorded in earlier surveys.

Here is the question asked since 1975:

Do you think abortions should be legal under any circumstances, legal under only certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances?"

Attitudes Toward Abortion

	1975	1977	1979	1980
	%	%	%	%
Legal under any circumstances	21	22	22	25
Legal under only certain circumstances	54	55	54	53
Illegal under all circumstances	22	19	19	18
No opinion	3	4	5	4

In 1973, the Supreme Court overruled all state laws that prohibit or restrict a woman's right to obtain an abortion during her first three months of pregnancy.

Catholic/Protestant Views

Although the Roman Catholic Church officially opposes abortion under all circumstances, many Catholics disagree with the Church's position on this issue. In fact, Catholic views are generally in line with those of Protestants.

Here's how the views of Catholics and Protestants compare:

Attitudes Toward Abortion

	Protestants	Catholics
	%	%
Legal under any circumstances	23	22
Legal under certain circumstances	55	55
Illegal under all circumstances	18	21
No opinion	4	2

The findings also show little difference between the views of men and women. Most likely to oppose abortions are older adults, persons in lower income groups, and those with less than a college background, as shown in the table below.

The results reported here are based on 1,548 personal interviews with adults, 18 and over, conducted in more than 300 scientifically-selected localities during the period July 11-14.

For results based on a sample of this size, one can say with 95 percent confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be three percentage points in either direction.

ATTITUDES TOWARD ABORTION

	Legal under any circumstances	Legal under certain circumstances	Illegal under all circumstances	No opinion
	%	%	%	%
NATIONAL	25	53	18	4
Men	24	51	20	5
Women	26	54	16	4
18 - 29 year olds	30	50	16	4
30 - 49 year olds	27	54	15	4
50 years and over	19	54	22	5
College background	35	53	9	3
High school	23	56	17	4
Grade school	13	42	37	8
Family Income:				
$15,000 and over	27	58	13	2
Under $15,000	22	47	24	7
Republicans	22	55	21	2
Democrats	25	53	19	3
Independents	28	55	13	4

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PRRC emerging trends

mar. 81

Published by the Princeton Religion Research Center Vol. 3, No. 3

TWO IN THREE SAY RELIGION CAN ANSWER TODAY'S PROBLEMS

PRINCETON, N.J. – The proportion of Americans who say religion can answer today's problems has levelled out in the latest survey, after a sharp decline between the years 1957 and 1974 in the percentage who held this view.

Currently, 65% say religion can answer all or most of our present problems, while 15% feel that religion is "largely old-fashioned and out of date" and 20% do not express an opinion.

Between 1957 and 1974, the proportion who believed religion provided answers for contemporary problems fell from 81% to 62%, a period during which other key indicators of religious behavior and attitudes registered a decline. As seen, the current figure represents a marginal increase over the 1974 figure.

The uptrend since 1974 in those seeing religion as relevant in today's world is most marked among persons with a college background (5-point increase) and among Catholics (6-point gain). Between 1957 and 1974 the decline had been sharpest among these two groups – the college-educated and Catholics.

RELATIONSHIP TO HAPPINESS?

Analysis of the current results reveals that persons in the survey who feel that religion can answer today's problems are considerably more likely to say they are "very happy" than are persons who believe religion is outmoded.

Following is the question asked to determine the public's views on religion and the problems of the day:

"Do you believe that religion can answer all or most of today's problems, or is it largely old-fashioned and out of date?"

Here is a comparison of the latest findings with those recorded in the earlier survey:

RELIGION ANSWER TODAY'S PROBLEMS?

	1957	1974	1981
Can answer	81%	62%	65%
Out of date	7	20	15
No opinion	12	18	20
	100%	100%	100%

The following table compares the percentages who currently believe religion can answer today's problems with the percentage who held this opinion in 1957.

RELIGION ANSWER TODAY'S PROBLEMS?
(By groups)

	1957	1974	1981
NATIONAL	81%	62%	65%
Under 30 years	84	55	58
30-49 years	80	64	60
50 and older	79	66	73
Protestants	83	70	72
Catholics	83	58	64
College background	78	52	57
High school	83	63	67
Grade school	79	73	73
Men	75	54	58
Women	86	70	71

And here is the table showing the relationship between those who say they are very happy and those who say religion can solve most of the present problems in today's world.

	Very Happy	Fairly Happy	Not too Happy	No Opinion
Religion can answer today's problems	49%	43%	8%	*
Religion is out-of-date	31	56	12	1

*Less than 1 percent.

TEENAGERS LESS LIKELY TO SAY RELIGION HAS ANSWERS

A somewhat smaller proportion of teenagers than adults feel that religion can answer all or most of today's problems. A Gallup Yourth Survey recently reported that 57% of teens feel that religion is relevant today, while 32% maintained that it is outmoded. Another 11% do not express an opinion.

Somewhat greater skepticism about religion's ability to help people cope with their everyday problems is expressed by teenage boys, whites, teens from white-collar occupational backgrounds, those whose parents are college-educated, Catholics and teens living in the East and far West.

In the adult survey, a total of 1,609 adults, 18 and older, were interviewed in more than 300 scientifically selected localities across the nation during the period January 30-February 2.

For results based on a sample of this size, one can say with 95 percent confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be three percentage points in either direction.

CATHOLIC WOMEN:

A RICH RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY

Catholic women are a rich resource for ministry in their Church, but their potential for active service is inadequately utilized. This is a conclusion of the recent study of women who devote significant amounts of time each week to ministry made by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), Washington, D.C., and the Gallup Poll. The women's activities were grouped in the following categories, with %'s engaged in each type:

Educational	30%
Liturgical	23
Administrative and support services	21
General pastoral	7
Spiritual	9
Social services	4
Recreational	3
Health-related	2
Social activist	2

Background Characteristics

Interviews with a national sample of these women showed they are, typically, middle-aged (36-50 year-olds predominate), married, and have children (but the size of their families tends to be small). They are relatively well-educated: nearly one-half have had some college education; over one-third have had additional preparation in business, nursing, or vocational training. Only half, though, report that they have had any specific training for their ministries, and it is usually informal or "on-the-job" training. When asked whether they feel they are using professional skills in their ministries, 24% said "A great deal," 24% said "considerably," and 24% said "sometimes."

When asked how they would rate the importance of ministry in their lives on a scale of 1-10 (where "1" indicates "no importance" and "10" indicates "It is the most important thing in my life"), the women responded as follows:

55% ranked ministry as 8 to 10

20% ranked ministry as 6 or 7

18% ranked ministry as 5 or below

In response to the question, "On the whole, have you been satisfied, dissatisfied, or have you had mixed feelings about your ministry?" responses were as follows:

Satisfied	73%
Dissatisfied	2
Mixed feelings	25

Another question asked whether the women hoped or expected to continue ministry "for the rest of your life, indefinitely, for a specified period, temporarily, or for how long?" Answers were:

Rest of my life	47%
Indefinitely	39
All other answers	15

Despite these indicators of commitment and satisfaction, which demonstrate the resource for ministry which women presently constitute, numerous areas of dissatisfaction were also identified. For example, some groups of women are conspicuously absent from the sample. According to the data gathered, Hispanic women constitute less than 5% of women-in-ministry, although Hispanics number about 20% in the total Catholic population. The poor are also underrepresented in ministry: only 18% of the respondents reported family incomes below $10,000 in 1978.

Major problem areas named were:

Lack of resources or money	37%
Church structures or rules	21
Relations with pastor, or other parish staff	21
Relations with parish council or other groups	9
Relations with others in same ministry	9
Non-acceptance by laity or community	16
Personal or family problems (e.g., role conflict)	10

Women in full-time ministry, such as women religious, were more apt to report problems or to express desire for change.

Twenty-six per cent of the women-in-ministry felt that they are *not* using their professional skills "at all" or "very much."

In a second phase of the study a random sample of Catholic women and men were interviewed about their experience as *recipients* of ministry. A large majority (76% of men and 75% of women) express at least moderate satisfaction with the ministry they have received over the last five years. On the other hand, only about one-third can be described as enthusiastic about the ministry they have received.

Among the problems mentioned by women and men are:

	Women	Men
1. Lack of particular service or program	8%	6%
2. Difficulty of communicating with a priest because he is a man	9	–
3. Failure to meet my needs at a particular time	9	13
4. Absence of women in key liturgical roles	8	7
5. Non-representation in decision-making	8	15

A great many Catholic women and men remain personally uninvolved in ministry, despite the fact that they are favorably inclined toward the Church and would like to be more involved. When shown a list of twelve possible ministries available to lay people, such as distributing Holy Communion or providing religious instruction, over 90% of those polled had never done any of them.

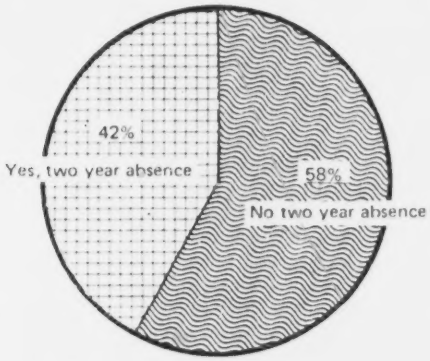
A symposium designed to explore the implications of the study's findings for the Church was held at Bergamo Conference Center in Dayton, Ohio, Feb. 14-16 Fifty participants from around the country spent three days developing recommendations for the Catholic Church in the areas of theology, pastoral planning, and preparation for ministry.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

KEY FINDINGS: 'THE UNCHURCHED AMERICAN'

THOSE WHO LEFT. . .

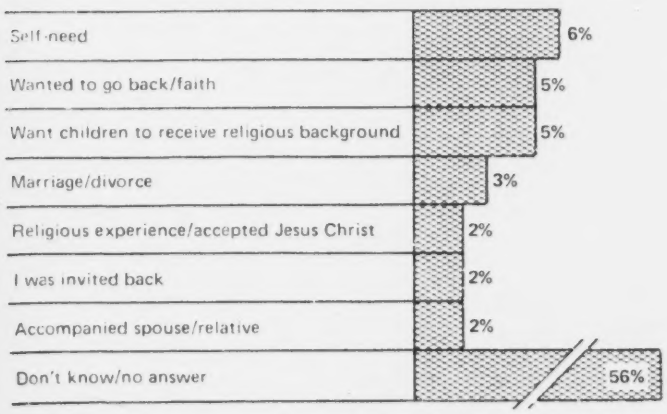
Question: Has there been a period of two years or more when you did not attend church or synagogue, apart from weddings, funerals, or special holidays such as Christmas, Easter, or Yom Kippur?



Source: Surveys by Princeton Religion Research Center and the Gallup Organization, Inc., for the Religious Coalition to study backgrounds, values and interests of Unchurched Americans, convened by The National Council of the Churches of Christ, in the U.S.A., April 14-17, 1978 and April 28-May 1,1978.

WHY SOME CAME BACK

Question: When you began attending again, what situation was most important in your decision to attend. (Asked of those who had had a period of two years or more when they did not attend.)

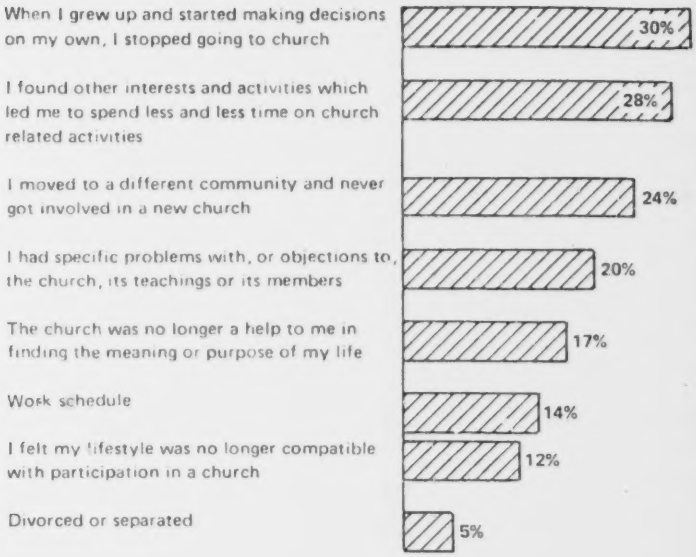


Note: Responses total more than 100%. Categories not shown are never attended (15%), getting older (1%), health returned (1%), other (2%).

Source: Surveys by Princeton Religion Research Center and the Gallup Organization, Inc., for the Religious Coalition April 14-17, 1978 and April 28-May 1, 1978.

. . .AND WHY THEY LEFT

Question: When you stopped attending, which of the statements on this card describe the reasons? Choose as many as apply. Just read off the letters. (Asked of those who have had a period of two years or more when they did not attend.)

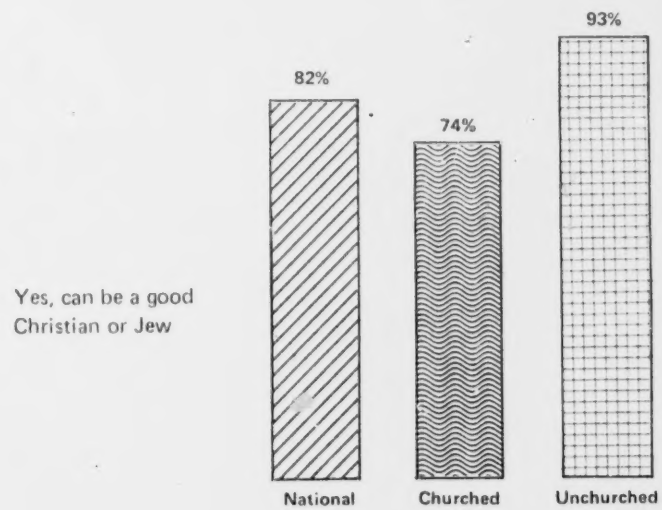

When I grew up and started making decisions on my own, I stopped going to church
30%
I found other interests and activities which led me to spend less and less time on church related activities
28%
I moved to a different community and never got involved in a new church
24%
I had specific problems with, or objections to, the church, its teachings or its members
20%
The church was no longer a help to me in finding the meaning or purpose of my life
17%
Work schedule
14%
I felt my lifestyle was no longer compatible with participation in a church
12%
Divorced or separated
5%

Note: Total adds to more than 100% due to multiple responses. Categories not shown are: poor health (6%), another reason (17%), don't know/no answer (7%).

Source: Surveys by Princeton Religion Research Center and the Gallup Organization, Inc., for the Religious Coalition April 14-17, 1978 and April 28-May 1, 1978.

HOW IMPORTANT IS ATTENDANCE?

Question: Do you think a person can be a good Christian or Jew if he or she doesn't attend church or synagogue?



Source: Surveys by Princeton Religion Research Center and the Gallup Organization, Inc., for the Religious Coalition April 14-17, 1978 and April 28-May 1, 1978.

Adapted from *PUBLIC OPINION*, March - May, 1979, published by American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C.

FOCUS ON YOUTH

TEENS Stumble on Naming Commandments

— Results from Gallup Youth Survey —

Commandments named:	All teen-agers	Regular churchgoers	Non-regular
• Don't steal	68%	73%	63%
• Don't commit adultery	61	69	54
• Don't murder	59	67	52
• Don't covet	37	45	30
• Honor mother and father	34	45	24
• Don't bear false witness	29	36	22
• Don't take Lord's name in vain	28	33	24
• Don't have other gods	25	35	15
• Keep Sabbath Day	16	24	9
• Don't worship idols	10	13	7

(Above results are based on 1,003 telephone interviews conducted in 1980 with a representative cross-section of teens, ages 13 to 18.)

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PRRC emerging trends

apr 81

Published by the Princeton Religion Research Center Vol. 3, No. 4

INTERFAITH TOLERANCE SHOWS GAIN

PRINCETON, N.J. – The recent rash of anti-Semitic incidents in various parts of the nation do not appear to be symptomatic of increased prejudice toward Jews in the U.S.

On the contrary, positive attitudes toward Jews have shown a marked increase in recent years, according to a variety of Gallup Poll measurements. So have attitudes toward Catholics and Protestants.

Using a special 10-point scale to measure degree of liking or disliking, called the Stapel Scalometer, the Gallup Poll asked survey respondents to indicate where they would place Jews (Catholics/Protestants) on this scale.

Following is the question:

"You will notice that the 10 boxes on this card go from the highest position of plus five – for someone or something you have a very *favorable* opinion of – all the way down to the lowest position of minus five – for someone or something you have a very *unfavorable* opinion of. How far up or how far down the scale would you rate Jews? (Catholics, Protestants)?"

The following table shows the trend in "highly favorable" opinion, with the results based on the top two positions (+5, +4) on the 10-point scale:

OPINION OF JEWS
(By total sample)

'HIGHLY FAVORABLE'

1981	40%
1976	34
1975	33

The following table shows the trend in "highly unfavorable" opinions, with the results based on the bottom two positions (-4 and -5) on the 10-point scale:

'HIGHLY UNFAVORABLE'

1981	2%
1976	4
1975	3

An increase in highly favorable opinion of Jews is recorded among both Protestants and Catholics, as seen in the tables below:

OPINION OF JEWS
(By Protestants)

'HIGHLY FAVORABLE'

1981	39%
1976	30
1975	30

And here is the trend in highly unfavorable opinion:

'HIGHLY UNFAVORABLE'

1981	2%
1976	4
1975	4

OPINION OF JEWS
(By Catholics)

'HIGHLY FAVORABLE'

1981	46%
1976	43
1975	40

And here is the trend in highly unfavorable opinion:

'HIGHLY UNFAVORABLE'

1981	2%
1976	1
1975	2

An increase in highly favorable opinion of Catholics and Protestants is also recorded, as seen in the tables that follow:

Protestants Rate Catholics

'Highly Favorable' Opinion of Catholics (Ratings given by Protestants)

1981	40%
1976	36
1975	34

'Highly Unfavorable' Opinion of Catholics (Ratings given by Protestants)

1981	4%
1976	5
1975	2

Catholics Rate Protestants

'Highly Favorable' Opinion of Protestants (Ratings given by Catholics)

1981	56%
1976	53
1975	48

'Highly Unfavorable' Opinion of Protestants (Ratings given by Catholics)

1981	1%
1976	*
1975	*

Further evidence of growing religious tolerance is seen from the results of earlier Gallup surveys, showing steady and marked declines in the proportions of

continued on next page

Interfaith Tolerance Shows Gain

continued from page 1

persons of major faiths who have feelings of animosity toward each other.

Specifically, the proportion of Protestants who say they have had unpleasant experiences that have made them dislike Catholics declined from nine percent in 1952 to two percent in the 1979 survey.

A similar downtrend was noted in the proportion of Catholics who hold animosity toward Protestants.

And finally, the percentage of both Catholics and Protestants who said they have had unpleasant experiences that caused them to dislike Jews has been on a steady downtrend.

Perceptions of Power Also Show Change

Further evidence of a growth in tolerance is seen in the declining proportions of Protestants who feel Catholics are getting too much power in the U.S. and of Catholics who feel Protestants are becoming too powerful.

In addition, a dramatic decline is found in the percentage of both Catholics and Protestants who hold this view about Jews in the U.S.

Growing Tolerance on Interfaith Marriages

Still further evidence that American society is becoming more tolerant, or accepting, in recent decades can be seen in the trend in attitudes on interfaith marriages, based on earlier Gallup surveys.

Between 1968 and 1978 the proportion of Americans who said they approve of marriages between Jews and non-Jews rose from 59% to 69%. A similar change was recorded in the case of marriages between Catholics and Protestants.

Gallup surveys have also shown that the climate for Jews, Catholics, and other minority groups, seeking political leadership roles has never been more favorable than it is at the present time. The percentage saying they would vote for a Jew for President, 46% in the first survey in 1937, was 82% in 1978. The trend in willingness to vote for a Catholic has also shown a dramatic change.

Growth in Education Seen as Key Factor

One of the key factors in the growth of religious tolerance in U. S. society has been the increase in the proportion of the populace with college training. This proportion has more than tripled since the Gallup Poll was founded in 1935. The college-educated segment in each survey has consistently been found to be more tolerant than those with less formal education.

Despite the cumulative survey evidence reported today, which shows an increase in goodwill toward Jews on a broad national basis, random anti-Semitic incidents (as well as acts directed against Christian churches and cemeteries) may be growing in number.

An annual national survey conducted by the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith revealed that there were 377 reported acts against Jewish institutions or private property nationwide in 1980. (The survey did not include acts of bodily assault, harassment, or threats by phone or mail, which were compiled separately.)

The latest Gallup figures reported are based on 1,601 in-person interviews conducted in over 300 scientifically-selected locations across the country during the period March 13-16. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be three percentage points in either direction. The error margin for figures based on Protestants is four percentage points; for those based on Catholics, six percentage points.

HOW MANY AMERICANS HAVE BEEN CONTACTED BY MORAL MAJORITY?

As of late November, a total of two percent in a nationwide Gallup survey had been contacted by mail by the Moral Majority, or an estimated three million adults. Less than half of one percent have been contacted in person, by phone or in some other way.

The question:

"Have you, yourself, been contacted within the last 6 months by anyone representing the Moral Majority -- either in person, by phone, by mail or in some other way?'.

The national results:

By mail	2%
In person	*
By phone	*
Some other way	*
Have not been contacted/ not sure	98
	100%

* Less than one percent.

CATHOLICS HAVE HIGHER SELF-ESTEEM QUOTIENT

PRINCETON, N.J. -- Catholics tend to have a higher self-esteem quotient than do Protestants.

A recent nationwide Gallup Poll shows two Catholics in three (67%) giving persons of their own faith and culture a "highly favorable" rating, while 60% of Protestants give Protestants such a rating.

A national sample of Catholics and of Protestants were handed a card and asked this question:

"You will notice that the 10 boxes on this card go from the highest position of plus five -- for someone you have a very favorable opinion of -- all the way down to the lowest position of minus five -- for someone you have a very unfavorable opinion of. How far up the scale or how far down the scale would you rate Catholics (Protestants)?"

The proportion of Catholics who have a "highly favorable" self image increased between 1975 and 1976, but has levelled out in more recent surveys, as seen in the following tables:

Catholics Giving Catholics A 'Highly Favorable' Rating (plus 5 and 4 on scalometer)

1981	67%
1976	69
1975	62

The proportion of Protestants who have a "highly favorable" self image has been on a general uptrend since the 1975 survey, as seen below:

Protestants Giving Protestants A 'Highly Favorable' Rating (plus 5 and 4 on scalometer)

1981	60%
1976	57
1975	51

Interestingly, Catholics give Protestants nearly as great a "highly favorable" rating as Protestants give themselves.

Legalizing "Pot" Opposed

PRINCETON, N.J. – If the American people were participating in a nationwide referendum, they would vote against legalizing the use of marijuana but at the same time would remove criminal penalties for the possession of small amounts of "pot."

Seven persons in 10 (70 percent) vote against legalizing the use of marijuana while one in four (25 percent) favors such a move. The public has not budged on this issue – a survey conducted one year earlier recorded exactly the same percentages.

As the table below indicates, support for legalization rose sharply between 1969 and 1977 and levelled off in the latest survey. When this measurement was initiated in 1969, only 12 percent of the public favored making the use of marijuana legal.

Here is the question asked to determine attitudes toward legalizing marijuana and the trend since 1969:

Do you think the use of marijuana should be made legal, or not?

Should Marijuana Be Legalized?

	Yes	No	No opinion
LATEST (Fall, 1980)	25%	70%	5%
1979	25	70	5
1977	28	66	6
1973	16	78	6
1972	15	81	4
1969	12	84	4

While opposed to legalization, the public is ready to decriminalize marijuana. A marjority, 52 percent, feels possession of small amounts of the substance should not be treated as a criminal offense, while 43 percent would retain criminal penalties.

Since 1973, 11 states, with roughly one-third of the U.S. population, have decriminalized pot, that is, made possession of small amounts (generally an ounce or less) a civil offense, much like a traffic ticket, punishable only by a fine.

Public opinion on decriminalization has also shown little change. A Gallup Poll taken in 1977 showed 53 percent in favor of decriminalization and 41 percent opposed.

Young, College-Educated Most in Favor of Decriminalization

Majority support for decriminalization is found in all key population groups with the exception of Southerners, those 50 years and older, and persons whose education ended at the grade school level.

In the vanguard of support for decriminalization are the young and the college-educated. Among these groups, two out of three persons support more lenient pot laws.

The table below shows the findings by key population groups on the legalization of marijuana and the decriminalization issue:

Should Marijuana Be Legalized?

	Yes	No	No opinion
NATIONAL	25%	70%	5%
Under 30 years	43	51	6
18 - 24	40	54	6
25 - 29	47	46	7
30 - 49	22	73	5
50 & over	13	82	5
College	35	60	5
High school	24	71	5
Grade school	11	83	6
East	27	68	5
Midwest	24	72	4
South	21	73	6
West	29	63	8

Should Marijuana Be Decriminalized?

	Should	Should not	No opinion
NATIONAL	43%	52%	5%
Under 30	27	68	5
18 - 24	27	67	6
25 - 29	26	70	4
39 - 49	45	52	3
50 & over	54	39	7
College	30	67	3
High school	45	50	5
Grade school	58	33	9
East	43	52	5
Midwest	40	54	6
South	51	45	4
West	33	60	7

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES OTHER THAN CHURCHGOING

One person in five (20 per cent) in Gallup surveys says he or she has taken part in religious activities other than church services in the seven-day period tested.

Of particular significance is the finding that virtually as many young adults (18 to 29 years old) as older people say they have participated in religious activities other than church attendance in the test week.

Here is the question asked:

"Did you happen to take part in religious activities other than church services in the last seven days, such as prayer group meetings, Bible reading classes, and the like?"

The key findings are:

	(Per cent saying yes)
Nationwide	20%
18 - 29 years	18
30 - 49 years	21
50 & over	21
Protestants	23
Catholics	17
Men	17
Women	23
College background	22
High school	21
Grade school	15

While the overwhelming proportion of those who participated in such activities – prayer group meetings, Bible reading classes and the like – also attended formal church services, it is interesting to note that 5 per cent of the total sample participated in religious activities but did not attend church during the test week.

The following table shows the relationship between religious activities and churchgoing, based on the total sample:

Attended church but did not participate in other religious activities	27%
Attended church and participated in other religious activities	16
Did not attend church but participated in other religious activities	5
Did not attend church and did not participate in religious activities	52

New Signs of Vitality in Religion

PRINCETON, N.J. – Religion is the U.S. is showing new signs of vitality, judging from 7 key measurements of religiosity among the American people.

These measurements, which probe religious behavior, attitudes, self-assessment and perceptions as to the impact of religion on society, represent a "levelling out" of several long-term downtrends – and in some cases, a reversal.

At the very least, these 7 measurements, individually and collectively, attest to the remarkable *stability* of religion in America – all the more remarkable in view of certain trends which could be expected to have a negative impact on religion, including the distractions of modern life, forces undermining the family, and the continuing conflict between the values of society and those of the church.

The results must be regarded as a testimony to the extraordinary efforts of the clergy and lay religious leaders during the 1970s. Thus far they have "held the line", but there are other disturbing trends in religion which threaten to undermine the efforts of the churches in the 1980s.

These trends – as well as the results of the 7 measurements or religiosity – are reported in the just-published 1981 issue of RELIGION IN AMERICA. Published by the Gallup Organization, Inc. and the Princeton Religion Research Center, this index will help you pinpoint the factors behind growth and loss in membership and support and will also provide other valuable data about the "state of the church."

The 7 measurements of religiosity deal with the following:

- Religious identification
- Church/synagogue membership
- Church/synagogue attendance
- Importance of religion in personal life
- Confidence in organized religion
- Perceptions of the influence of religion on society
- The saliency of religion in today's society

Full demographic information is provided. Where possible trends are illustrated by charts.

To order RELIGION IN AMERICA, 1981, send check for $20 to the Princeton Religion Research Center, P.O. Box 310, 53 Bank Street, Princeton, NJ 08540.

HOW TO REACH THE UNCHURCHED AMERICAN

Some 61 million American adults are not members of any church. Yet as many as half this number see a situation where they could become active members of a church today.

A nationwide study – the first to deal specifically with the values, interests, and backgrounds of the unchurched – points to concrete steps that can be taken to reach those who are churchless. This study was carried out by the Gallup Organization and the Princeton Religion Research Center for a coalition of 31 religious groups and denominations.

The report on this study has been reprinted due to popular demand. To order, send $15 to the Princeton Religion Research Center, Inc., P.O. Box 310, 53 Bank Street, Princeton, NJ 08540.

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PRRC
emerging trends

Published by the Princeton Religion Research Center *Vol. 3, No. 5*

May 81

RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE SEEN AT NADIR

PRINCETON, N.J. – Few trends in religion so threaten to undermine organized religion in the 1980s as does the sorry state of biblical knowledge in our nation and the shocking lack of knowledge about the basis of our Judao-Christian heritage.

A recent Gallup Youth Survey shows that only three teens in 10 – most of whom stated their religious preference as Christian – are correctly able to answer three simple and basic questions drawn from the New Testament that are keystones of the Christian heritage. Even among teens who attend church regularly (about half of those polled by the Gallup Youth Survey) only 43% answered all three questions correctly. One teen-ager in five, 19%, was unable to come up with the right answer to *any* of the quiz questions.

Many Do Not Know What Happened on Easter

Central to the Christian religion is the significance of Easter – the resurrection (or rising from the dead) of Jesus Christ. And teens participating in the survey did best on this question, with 71% able to describe the Easter event. However, the fact that 29% of all teen-agers – and 20% of those who attend religious service regularly – didn't know what Easter commemorates will be shocking to Christian leaders.

The survey also showed that only one-third of all teens, and only half of church attenders, were able to name the four Gospels of the New Testament. Teens did better on the number of Christ's Apostles (12), with two out of three getting this one right. But two out of 10 regular churchgoers drew a blank.

Some groups within the total teen population were more knowledgeable than others about the Bible: girls, older teens of both sexes, teens living in the South, those whose school grades are better than average and teens whose parents attended college – as well as those who attend religious services on a regular basis. Catholics and Protestants scored about equally on the test.

The current quiz results represent further evidence of the low state of biblical knowledge among the youth of this country. As reported earlier, most teens believe the Ten Commandments are still valid rules for living – but they have a tough time recalling exactly what those rules are.

Survey Questions; Sample Size

Following are the questions asked in the New Testament quiz. The findings in table form are on page 2.

"Can you name the four Gospels of the New Testament of the Bible?"

"How many disciples did Jesus have?"

"What religious event or happening is celebrated on Easter?"

The findings are based on telephone interviews with a representative national cross-section of 1,030 boys and girls, ages 13 to 18, conducted in November, 1980.

4 in 10 Teens Receive Religious Training

Part of the explanation for the low level of biblical knowledge found among teen-agers is seen in the results of an earlier Gallup Youth Survey. That survey revealed that only 4 in 10 teen-agers were receiving religious training. And in only one part of the country – the South – were more than 50% of the teens getting some form of religious education.

Nationwide, those most likely to be receiving religious intruction were Protestants, young teens (ages 13-15), nonwhites, girls, and teens with an academic standing above average.

But the figures for virtually every subgroup of teens were well below the 50% mark, and taken as an average, only 39% of the teens polled said religious training was a regular part of their life.

The kinds of religious training cited most often – by well over half of the teen-agers who were receiving such training – were Sunday school (named primarily by Protestants) and religious or parochial school (named mostly by Catholics).

Smaller groups of teens included "at home religious training" and "school courses in religion" as part of their current spiritual education.

While relatively few teens were receiving religious training – especially in view of the fact that an overwhelming majority said they were affiliated with a major faith and were members of a particular church – the poll showed that those who did get such training were generally satisfied with what they were receiving. Indeed, the ratio of those satisfied to those who were not was twelve to one.

Home Seen as Key Training Ground

According to a nationwide Gallup Poll, the prevailing opinion among all groups and all faiths in the U.S. is that the home is more important than either the church or schools in the religious training of children.

The survey (conducted in 1979) showed 75% naming the home, 16% naming the church, and only 3% naming the schools as the most important to the religious and spiritual development of a child.

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RELIGION QUIZ (% correct)

	4 Gospels of N.T.	Number of disciples	Easter Event	All 3 correct
NATIONAL	35%	66%	71%	30%
Boys	31	64	68	25
Girls	39	68	74	34
Both sexes:				
13 - 15 years old	32	61	69	26
16 - 18 years old	38	71	73	34
Protestants	37	67	70	31
Catholics	37	71	76	33
Academic standing:				
Above average	39	71	77	34
Average or below	30	59	63	24
Parent's education:				
Some college or beyond	44	71	80	40
No college	29	61	64	23
East	33	66	71	28
Midwest	41	71	75	36
South	32	63	67	28
West	33	62	68	26
Regular church attenders	50	81	80	43
Non-regular attenders	19	50	61	16

Economy Far Greater Concern Than Morals Among Evangelicals

PRINCETON, N.J. – When asked to name what they believe to be the most important problem facing the nation today, evangelicals are nearly 6 times as likely to name an economic problem (inflation, unemployment, etc.) as they are to cite "moral decline in society."

At the same time, however, evangelicals are 5 times as likely as non-evangelicals to say a decline in morals is the top problem facing our nation.

The question, based on a nationwide Gallup survey conducted in May:

"What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?"

Following are the problems named most often (of the many problems named):

Most Important Problem Facing Nation?

	Evangelicals	Non-evangelicals
Economic problems	61%	79%
Moral decline	11	2
International problems	10	9
Crime	6	4

TOPICS TO BE COVERED IN UPCOMING ISSUES

* Is the appeal of the cults growing?
* The role of women in religion today.
* Will efforts to create a Christian voting bloc succeed?
* Views of the British on God, the Bible.
* Updates on confidence in organized religion, the importance of religion in people's lives.
* How do the views of evangelicals on abortion compare with those of non-evangelicals?

'GAP' IN RELIGIOUS INVOLVEMENT

(5 Protestant Denominations)

	CHURCH MEMBERS (of total)	REGULAR ATTENDERS (of total)	% POINT DIFFERENCE
LUTHERANS	76%	42%	–34
BAPTISTS	75	38	–37
PRESBYTERIANS	75	38	–37
METHODISTS	72	34	–38
EPISCOPALIANS	70	30	–40

The table above shows the difference in the percentages of 5 major Protestant groups of churches between membership and regular church attendance. As the figures indicate, a slightly greater gap is found in the case of Episcopalians than the other 4 groups of churches.

In British Gallup Poll

Belief In Jesus' Divinity Declines

Since 1957 belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ among the British population has been on a steady decline.

In 1957, a total of 71% of the British expressed the belief that Jesus Christ was the "Son of God", while 9% said "just a man" and 6% "just a story." An additional 14% did not express an opinion.

Today, 52% believe Jesus is the "Son of God", a decline of nearly 20 points since 1957, while 31% say "just a man" and 5% "just a story." The remaining 12% do not express an opinion.

These findings are from a major survey on religion, conducted for *The Sunday Telegraph* by the Gallup-affiliated organization in that country (Social Surveys [Gallup Poll] Ltd.).

Here is the question asked about Jesus Christ:

"Do you believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God or just a man?"

Here is the trend since 1957:

BELIEFS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

	Today	'79	'63	'57
Son of God	52%	55%	60%	71%
Just a Man	31	25	16	9
Just a story	5	7	7	6
Don't know	12	13	17	14

Persons in the same survey were also asked about these beliefs: God, Heaven, reincarnation, Hell and the Devil.

28% Believe in Reincarnation

Belief in reincarnation, rising to 28 per cent of the public in 1979, remains at this level and indicates the growing interest in Eastern religions and similar cuits in recent years.

The British Gallup Poll asked: "Which, if any, of the following do you believe in?" and the replies were:

GOD

Today	73%
1979	76
1975	72
1973	74
1968	77

HEAVEN

Today	53%
1979	57
1975	49
1973	51
1968	54

REINCARNATION

Today	28%
1979	28
1975	22
1973	22
1968	18

HELL

Today	21%
1979	22
1975	20
1973	20
1968	23

THE DEVIL

Today	21%
1979	22
1975	20
1973	18
1968	21

Analysis of these beliefs by sex and age shows that women more than men and the not-so-young more than the young believe in God and Heaven, while belief in reincarnation; the Devil and Hell is more evenly spread, as seen in the accompanying table.

Non-attenders Also Believe

Analysis by frequency of church-going shows similar sharp differences and also suggests that non-attendance at church does not necessarily mean lack of religious beliefs.

For example, while 97% of those claiming to go to church at least once a month believe in God, 52% of those who never go, or almost never go, also believe in God. Belief in Heaven drops from 86% to 34% between these two groups.

BASIC BELIEFS OF THE BRITISH POPULATION
(Analysis by Groups)

	God	Heaven	Reincarnation	Hell	Devil
Total	73%	53%	28%	21%	21%
— By Sex of Respondent —					
Men	64	45	23	19	17
Women	82	60	32	22	24
— By Age Groups —					
16 - 24	60	45	34	18	20
25 - 34	64	43	28	22	23
35 - 44	75	52	23	26	26
45 - 64	82	60	27	20	18
65 plus	84	63	26	20	18

(Based on 1981 British Gallup Poll)

Focus On Youth

50% Of Teens Attend Church Weekly

PRINCETON, N.J. – One teenager in every two attended church or synagogue in a 7-day test period, as determined by a recent Gallup Youth Survey, about the same level of attendance as recorded in four earlier surveys conducted since June, 1977.

The latest survey, undertaken in conjunction with the Associated Press, shows 50% of teens saying they attended church during the week prior to the interview.

Following is the question asked in 5 national surveys of teenagers:

"Did you happen to attend church or synagogue in the last 7 days, or not?"

Here is the trend:

Attended in Test Week

November, 1980	50%
April, 1980	50
May, 1979	49
March, 1978	50
June, 1977	47

Churchgoing is higher among younger teens than among older, among girls than boys, among Southerners than among persons living in other regions of the nation, and it is higher among those whose academic standing is above average versus those whose standing is average or below. An equal rate of attendance is recorded for Protestants and Catholics.

Following are the results in tabular form:

NATIONAL	51%
13-15 years	54
16-18 years	47
Boys	46
Girls	55
East	50
Midwest	49
South	54
West	48
Above average academically	56
Average or below	44
Protestants	54
Catholics	54

The current rate of churchgoing among teenagers is higher than that of adults, 18 and older. The latest Gallup Poll audit shows that 40% of adults nationwide attended church or synagogue in a typical week of 1980.

RELIGION IN AMERICA, 1981 NOW AVAILABLE

The 1981 issue of *RELIGION IN AMERICA* is now available! Published by the Gallup Organization, Inc. and the Princeton Religion Research Center, this index will help you pinpoint the factors behind growth and loss in membership and support. It will also provide other valuable data about the "state of the Church."

The latest index provides updates on church and synagogue attendance, church membership, religious preference, the importance of religion in one's life, confidence in organized religion and public perceptions of the influence of religion on society.

Full demographic information is provided. Where possible, trends are illustrated by charts.

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Published by the Princeton Religion Research Center
Vol. 3, No. 6
June 81

THE POLLS AND RELIGIOUS BELIEF

(The following article is adapted from an article written by George Gallup, Jr. for the April/May issue of PUBLIC OPINION.)

Long after the November elections, debate continues about the likely impact of conservative Christian groups on the political scene and on society as a whole. Some critics view with alarm the rise of these groups and their leaders' claims to have "enough votes to change history." The critics see in conservative Christian activities an attempt to encourage conformity along religious or ideological lines, and see in conservative Christian groups a serious threat to civil liberties.

Similarly, observers of the American religious scene worry that the debate will exacerbate tensions between religious groups and denominations on the "left" and those on the "right." Such a development might undermine what is generally viewed to be a trend toward greater goodwill among religious groups in the United States, and a growing belief in ecumenism.

In view of what appears to be growing suspicion and distrust between the religious "left" and "right," it is important to examine certain basic questions about evangelicals and the Christian right. The fact is, there is much misinformation circulating about persons who call themselves "born again." For example, contrary to a popular assumption, not all evangelicals can be categorized as part of what is called the "Christian right." Similarly, not all evangelicals are fundamentalists. Some people – totally ignorant of the evangelical movement and its important contributions to religion in America – simply dismiss evangelicals as "rednecks" and "Holy Rollers."

Certain questions that need to be examined are: "Who are the evangelicals, and who makes up the Christian right?" "How pervasive are evangelical beliefs in American life?" And, "How do the beliefs of evangelicals interact with their social, political, and ethical views?"

These questions *were* addressed in a survey undertaken by the magazine *Christianity Today*. The magazine commissioned the Gallup Organization and its affiliate, the Princeton Religion Research Center of Princeton, New Jersey, to survey Americans aged eighteen and older about their personal beliefs, practices, and attitudes. The survey, developed after considerable discussion with religious scholars and professional survey researchers, produced a figure of 20 percent of Americans who fell into one or the other of two rigid categories of evangelicals.

Two other independent Gallup measurements, although less detailed than the *Christianity Today* gauge, also produced a figure close to 20 percent, or one-fifth of the total adult population. In Gallup Poll surveys, evangelicals have been defined as those displaying three basic characteristics:

1. They describe themselves as "born again Christians," or say they have had a "born again" experience.

2. They have encouraged other people to believe in Jesus Christ.

3. They believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible (or come closer to this view than to the next closet view, "the Bible is the inspired word of God, but not everything in it is to be taken literally, word for word").

Nineteen percent answered all these questions in the affirmative.

Identifying the "Christian Right"

Identifying the Christian right, a coalition of conservative Christian groups, is as difficult as identifying evangelicals. The Gallup Poll recently attempted to identify this segment of the population by using the following criteria: persons who are Christian in their religious preference; who describe themselves as "very religious"; place themselves to the right on a liberal/conservative scale; and say they are biblical literalists.

More Pro-Reagan

It is not surprising that a high percentage of this group could be classified as evangelicals. But the Christian right, as identified in this experiment, tends to be considerably more Republican and more pro-Reagan than do the evangelicals as a group.

According to our definition, about one-fourth (23 percent) of the total adult population could be considered part of the Christian right. Our 23 percent figure, however, is likely to be higher than the actual figure, since the "moderately right" as well as the "far right" were included in order to increase our sample base of analysis.

The Moral Majority

Probably the most prominent group among the Christian right is the Moral Majority. Some political observers believe the Moral Majority, started by the Reverend Jerry Falwell, was largely responsible for the defeat of key members of Congress in the November elections.

Less than half of the national sample (40 percent) had heard or read about the Moral Majority when the survey was conducted (late November), while even fewer were familiar with its objectives and goals. Among those familiar with these objectives and goals (26 percent of the

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Polls and Religious Belief (continued)

sample), disapproval of the Moral Majority outweighed approval – 13 to 8 percent respectively, with 5 percent undecided.

While a relatively small proportion of the public was supportive of the Moral Majority at the time the survey was undertaken, it should be noted that the 8 percent in favor projects to 12 or 13 million adults nationally, a number large enough to be decisive in close congressional races.

Differences by Groups

Republicans and those who voted for Ronald Reagan are far more likely to hold favorable opinions of the Moral Majority than are Democrats and those who voted for President Jimmy Carter.

Church members, regular churchgoers, those who watch religious television programs, and persons who say religion plays an important role in their lives are more favorably disposed toward the Moral Majority than are their opposite numbers. Southerners are found to be more receptive to the Moral Majority than are persons living in other parts of the country.

Future Impact

Evangelicals and various groups on the Christian right can be expected to have a significant impact on the religious scene in the United States, since evangelicals in many respects are the energizing force behind the nation's religious renewal.

The likely impact of evangelicals on the political and social scene, however, is more difficult to assess. Collectively, evangelicals and the Christian right may have enough votes to "change the course of history," but their influence may be less pronounced than expected for the following reasons:

1. Discouragement over the state of morals in society has led evangelicals and conservative Christians – and probably most Americans – to give high priority to moral issues. At the same time, however, when Americans are asked to name "the most important problem facing the nation," inflation, unemployment, international relations, crime, and energy problems are all named ahead of "moral problems." Furthermore, in national elections the "bread and butter" issues of peace and prosperity tend to overshadow moral issues in the thinking of the electorate.

2. Evangelicals and conservative Christians tend to look to their leaders, some of whom have wide audiences on television, for guidance on problems facing society. According to the *Christianity Today*/Gallup survey, at least half the U.S. public thinks it is "very important" or "fairly important" for religious organization to make public statements on political and economic matters as to what they feel would be consonant with the will of God.

At the same time, however, majorities of Americans of all faiths tend to draw the line at being told by their leaders how to vote; considerable resistance is found to being mobilized into a Christian voting bloc.

3. Evangelicals and conservative Christians, while tending to coalesce around certain religious and moral issues, are by no means monolithic in their views on other voter issues.

Gallup surveys taken last fall, for example, revealed that evangelicals and nonevangelicals have similar attitudes toward gun registration, building more nuclear power plants, the death penalty for murder, and government social programs.

Views on ERA

Futhermore, the differences on other key issues are perhaps not so great as might be expected. For example, 70 percent of nonevangelicals favor the ERA, but so do a 56 percent majority of evangelicals. When it comes to increased defense spending, 61 percent of nonevangelicals and 65 percent of evangelicals are in favor of stepping up spending for the military.

In the case of issues pertaining to personal morality and religion, however, major differences are found between evangelicals and nonevangelicals. For example:

- Twice as many nonevangelicals as evangelicals favor allowing homosexuals to teach in the public schools.
- On the focal issue of banning abortions, 31 percent of nonevangelicals express support for such action while 43 percent of evangelicals do so – a pronounced difference, but, again, perhaps less than one might expect.
- The sharpest divergence is found in regard to prayer in the schools. Even when the issue is posed in terms of *requiring* prayer (the Supreme Court ruled that public schools may not *sponsor* prayers), the vast majority of evangelicals (84 percent) vote in support while 56 percent of nonevangelicals do so.

A comparison of the views of those categorized as part of the Christian right and those who do not fit this categorization reveals a similar pattern.

4. Religious beliefs are certainly focal in the stance of evangelicals and conservative Christians on key voter issues, but the question must be raised – if it comes down to a question of religious principles or economic well-being, how will Americans vote?

The cumulative evidence suggests the efforts to create a Christian voting bloc will be blunted by the fact that while there is a wide divergence of opinion on issues related to personal morality and religion among the groups discussed in this article, surprisingly little difference is found on those issues which dominate national elections.

Debate Will Continue

The debate on the impact of conservative Christians will undoubtedly continue unabated. Some religious observers would likely maintain there has been too much heat in this debate and not enough light. They are hopeful that further dissemination of information about the status of religion in America will enable both those on the "left" and those on the "right" to come to see more clearly not that which divides them, but that which unites them.

RELIGION IN AMERICA, 1981 NOW AVAILABLE

The 1981 issue of *RELIGION IN AMERICA* is now available! Published by the Gallup Organization, Inc. and the Princeton Religion Research Center, this index will help you pinpoint the factors behind growth and loss in membership and support. It will also provide other valuable data about the "state of the Church."

To order, send check for $20 to the Princeton Religion Research Center, P.O. Box 310, Princeton, NJ 08540.

British Gallup Poll

3 In 10 Are Atheists Or Agnostics

PRINCETON, N.J. – A recent survey conducted by the British Gallup Poll shows that 36% of the British believe in a "personal God", 37% believe in "some sort of spirit or life force," while 15% say "they don't know what to think" (agnostics) and 12% reply they "don't really think there is any sort of spirit or life force" (atheists).

This was the question asked:

"Which of these statements comes closest to your belief?"

Relatively little change has come about in these proportions in surveys conducted since 1957, as seen in the following table:

BELIEF IN GOD

	Today	'79	'63	'57
There is a personal God	36%	35%	38%	41%
There is some sort of spirit or life force	37	41	33	37
I don't know what to think	15	16	20	16
I don't really think there is any sort of spirit or life force	12	8	9	6

Men and young adults are less likely to believe in a personal God than are women and the elderly: 30% of men believe in a personal God and 37% think there is some sort of spirit or life force; the figures for women are 42% and 38% respectively.

Analysis by frequency of church-going shows similar sharp differences and also suggests that non-attendance at church does not necessarily mean lack of religious beliefs.

For example, while 97% of those claiming to go to church at least once a month believe in God, 52% of those who never go, or almost never go, also believe in God. Belief in Heaven (also examined in the current survey) drops from 86% to 34% respectively between these two groups.

Beliefs About The Bible

As many as one-third of the British (34%) believe the New Testament to be "mostly a collection of stories and fables." A somewhat greater proportion, 42%, hold this belief about the Old Testament.

Here are the latest beliefs about the New Testament compared with those recorded in a survey conducted two years ago:

BELIEFS ABOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT

	Today	1979
It is of divine authority and its commands should be followed without question	14%	13%
It is mostly of divine authority but some of it needs interpretation	39	42
It is most a collection of stories and fables	13	17
Don't know	13	17
	100%	100%

And here are the results for the Old Testament:

	Today	1979
It is of divine authority and its commands should be followed without question question	14%	12%
It is mostly of divine authority but some of it needs interpretation	34	39
It is mostly a collection of stories and fables	42	33
Don't know	10	16
	100%	100%

While the proportion of British who believe the Old and New Testaments to be mostly a collection of stories and fables has grown over the last two years, as many as 68% now think the Bible is essential to the Christian Church, compared with 60% two years ago.

The survey was based on a nationally representative quota sample of 994 adults, aged 16 and over, in more than 100 districts between April 8 and 13. The survey was conducted for *The Sunday Telegraph*.

ALCOHOL ABUSE A PROBLEM IN 1 IN 5 HOMES

PRINCETON, N.J. – A total of 22% of Americans say their homes are troubled by alcohol-related problems, nearly double the 12% recorded in 1974.

In the latest survey, women are almost twice as likely to perceive family problems related to the use of alcohol as are men. Of particular concern is the fact that slightly more persons under 30 years of age told Gallup interviewers that alcohol had caused trouble in their families than did persons 30 and older.

A somewhat higher proportion of alcohol-related problems is reported by persons from blue-collar than from white-collar households. Survey participants whose formal education ended at the high school level or earlier were also more apt to cite an alcohol-related family problem than the college-educated segment of the population.

Following is the question asked and the trend since 1950:

Has liquor ever been a cause of trouble in your family?

Alcohol-Related Problems?
(percent saying yes)

1981	22%
1978	22
1976	17
1974	12
1966	12
1950	14

7 In 10 Are Drinkers

The latest nationwide audit of alcoholic beverage drinking shows 70% of adults, 18 and older, saying they use liquor, wine, or beer, while 30% are total abstainers. This is about the same level recorded in 1979, 1978, and 1976. The lowest percentage of drinkers recorded during 42 years of measurements was in 1958 when 55% said they used alcoholic beverages.

The highest proportion of drinkers today is found among men, younger persons, higher-income groups, those living outside the South, Catholics, professional and business people, and persons with a college background.

Views Of Evangelicals On Abortion

PRINCETON, N.J. – Senator Jesse Helms (R-North Carolina) and others have been pressing for action on a bill which would circumvent the Supreme Court's decision, which permits a woman to obtain an abortion during the first three months of pregnancy, by stating that human life begins at conception.

Senator Helms speaks for many evangelicals. The current survey indicates that persons who can be broadly classified as evangelicals are overwhelmingly opposed to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling. In addition, they are far more inclined than non-evangelicals to believe that human life begins at conception.

The following question was asked about the 1973 Supreme Court ruling:

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that a woman may go to a doctor to end pregnancy at any time during the first three months of pregnancy. Do you favor or oppose this ruling?

As the following table indicates, the difference in views between evangelicals and non-evangelicals is wider than the difference between the views of Protestants and Catholics:

1973 Supreme Court Ruling

	Favor	Oppose	No opin.
NATIONAL	45%	46%	9%
Evangelicals	30	60	10
Non-evangelicals	51	41	8
Protestants	45	46	9
Catholics	37	56	7

The following table shows the close correlation between views on the Court ruling and opinion on when human life begins:

	Favor ruling	Oppose ruling	No opin.
Life begins at:			
Conception	27%	66%	7%
Birth	73	20	7
Some point inbetween	70	21	9

Here is the question dealing with the issue of when life begins:

Some people feel that human life begins at the moment of conception. Others feel that human life does not begin until the baby is actually born. Do you, yourself, feel that human life begins at conception, at the time of birth, or at some point in between?

Here are the national results, and those by groups. Of particular interest is the findings that a substantially higher proportion of women than men believe human life begins at conception.

Here are the results:

When Does Life Begin?

	Conception	Birth	Between	No opin.
NATIONAL	54%	17%	22%	7%
Evangelicals	68	11	18	3
Non-evangelicals	48	20	24	8
Protestants	52	16	26	6
Catholics	66	13	14	7
Women	59	14	22	5
Men	49	21	22	8

The results reported today are based on 1,519 personal interviews with adults, 18 and over, conducted in more than 300 scientifically-selected localities during the period May 8-11.

EMERGING TRENDS is published monthly except July and August by the PRINCETON RELIGION RESEARCH CENTER. The Center, founded in 1977, is an inter-faith non-denominational research organization with headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey. The PRRC specializes in creative, actionable research, utilizing the worldwide attitudinal and behavioral facilities of Gallup International. The purpose of the PRRC is to gain a better understanding of the nature and depth of religious commitment in the U.S. and abroad and to explore ways this information can enable religious leaders to promote spiritual growth. A one year subscription can be obtained for $20; inquire: **Publications Department, 53 Bank Street, Princeton, N.J. 08540 (Telephone: 609-924-2809). PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS CHANGE.**

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